



RIDER REPORT

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Cursive Writing Making a Comeback



Teresa Rider
President

April

1st

April Fool's Day

1st

National Walk to
Work Day

15th

Income Taxes Due

22nd

Earth Day

26th

Administrative
Professionals Day

27th

Take Your Son or
Daughter to Work
Day

28th

Arbor Day



If you're a Baby Boomer and your memory is long, you remember the time in grade school when teachers laboriously watched over your shoulder as you tried to make the perfect cursive alphabet, then began the creative task of creating your own signature. With modern computer technology, the Internet and e-signatures only a few clicks on a screen, it's thought that old-fashioned loops and curves to form letters and words has gone the way of the slide rule. Not so fast! Alabama and Louisiana passed laws in 2016 mandating cursive proficiency in public schools, the latest of 14 schools to do so. Joining them last fall was the New York City public school system, which teaches 1.1 million students and is the largest regional school system in the country. Teachers there are encouraging students to learn cursive in the third grade. Diane Neikam, supervisor of elementary curriculum in a Pennsylvania school district, explains how this is taught. "The students receive a handwriting book, the teachers show them the strokes and letters and how to connect the strokes. They'll do a small, quick mini-lesson, and then the students will practice it on their own." There are several advantages to this approach. First, it improves hand motor skills. Second, it helps students comprehend documents that are hand-written. Third, it improves students' notetaking skills. Some students become more proficient at writing notes than typing on a computer. Critics question whether printing might be advantageous over handwriting, and if taking the time to teaching cursive would be spent learning something more useful. Still, there are times when mastering cursive would be helpful. New York State Assemblywoman Nicolee Malliotakis began arguing for cursive education after she encountered an 18-year-old at a voter registration event, who could no more than print his name in block letters. "I said to him, 'No, you have to sign here.'" Mailliotakis recalled. His reply: "That is my signature. I never learned script."

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Top 10 Gardening Tips



1. Start Seeds. There's nothing more thrilling than to sow tiny seeds, then see them germinate and pop up out of the soil as small seedlings in a matter of days. [Seed](#) starting is a great gardening tip as a way to get kids involved in gardening. It's so easy -- all you need is potting soil, a vessel (or the ground), water, and seeds. [Seed](#) starting is also the most inexpensive way to raise plants.
2. Mulch! Adding a thick layer of mulch around your [garden plants](#) and landscaping shrubs and trees will cut weeding time to almost nil, making it a labor-saving gardening tip. Use whatever mulch you like or is readily available -- shredded cedar bark, pine needles, grass clippings, gravel or stone. All you need is a pretty, spreadable medium to place around the plants in your landscape or garden. Mulches made from plant material (bark, needles, clippings) will break down over time and can be refreshed with a top layer every couple of years.
3. Plant Fragrance. Flowers are beautiful just as they are, but why not add another dimension to your gardening experience? As a gardening tip, planting fragrant flowers and herbs means you'll be greeted with sweet perfume when you garden as well as beautiful flowers and foliage. The most fragrant perennial flowers include roses, peonies, and lilacs. Try perfumed annuals in containers; heliotrope, petunia, and alyssum all add scents. Tropical vines such as jasmine can add fragrance to a porch or patio.
4. Grow Herbs. Even if you don't have room for a [vegetable garden](#), a simple container on a patio provides a spot to grow a lush [herb garden](#) that offers all the flavors of the world at your fingertips. Herbs are eager growers, can take a little neglect, and produce delicious edible leaves and flowers. Try a mixed container combination of three herbs that reflect your cooking tastes -- Mediterranean: basil, thyme, oregano; Asian: cilantro, lemon grass, Thai basil; or French: parsley, tarragon, rosemary.
5. Add Tropicals. Another gardening tip? Add the lush feeling of the tropics to porches and patios with leafy, tropical foliage plants. Palms, *Dracaena*, and *Sanseiveria* all do well on shaded front porches, providing instant jungle ambiance to outdoor dining and seating spaces. Enjoy them all summer, then bring them indoors and place in every room. Foliage plants help cleanse the air of indoor toxins.
6. Survey Your Garden. Take 5 minutes a day to walk through your garden. You can keep an eye out for insect pests or disease and treat before it becomes a big deal. And as you stroll, deadhead (remove) faded blooms; this encourages plants to produce more flowers.
7. Plant Natives. Native perennials are species that are already adapted to the climate, rainfall, and soil in your region. These plants take less care than other perennials and will often do better than other types of perennials because they evolved in the area where you are planting them.
8. Cover up with Vines. Do you need a little backyard privacy? Or do you have an unsightly fence or blank garage side? A trellis is a great gardening idea: A flowering vine creates a beautiful screen or cover up. Fast-growing annual vines include morning glory, sweet peas, and cup-and-saucer vine. Perennial vine varieties get bigger and better -- and last for years. Options include *Clematis*, honeysuckle vine, and trumpet creeper vine.
9. Solve Lawn Problems with Groundcovers. If you want to mow less and enjoy your landscape more, a gardening tip is to remove turf in areas that it are struggling and replace with perennial groundcovers. Shady spots and areas below trees with shallow roots can be planted with a lush assortment of groundcovers such as *Ajuga*, *Vinca*, and *Pachysandra*.
10. Harvest Edibles from Your Landscape. Wouldn't it be wonderful to step out the door and harvest fresh fruit, veggies, and herbs from your front or backyard? You can with this gardening tip: Add a wide variety of beautiful edible plants. Try small-space shrub "Jellybean" blueberry, use strawberries as sidewalk edging plants, and add tiny-leaf 'Spicy Glove' basil to a window box or container.